

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

Report of Proceedings of Annual Conference 1979, held at Acklam Hall  
on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 13th, 14th and 15th April 1979.

ATTENDANCES

Friday AM. 12 Branches represented, 27 delegates sitting. (Branches not represented Bolton, Edinburgh, SW London)  
Friday PM 14 Branches represented, 32 delegates sitting. (Branches not represented Edinburgh)  
Saturday PM 14 Branches represented, 31 delegates sitting. (Branches not represented Edinburgh)  
Sunday AM. 12 Branches represented, 24 delegates sitting. (Branches not represented Bolton, Edinburgh, Haringey)  
Sunday PM. 14 Branches represented, 32 delegates sitting. (Branches not represented Edinburgh).

FINANCIAL REPORT

<u>Canteen</u>	Takings £116-23
	Purchases £62-01
	<u>BALANCE £54-22</u>

<u>Collections</u>	£30-83
	£28-60
	£28-26
<u>TOT'L</u>	<u>£87-69</u>

<u>Lit' sales</u>	£31-60
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1.

FRIDAY PROCEEDINGS COMMENCED AT 11-10 AM.

Cde D Davies (Westminster Br) was elected as Chairman and Cde H Valler (Glasgow Br) as Deputy Chairman.

It was Agreed that Cdes L Cox and K Knight act as tellers.

It was Agreed to take Amendments to Rule as first business in the afternoon. Swansea and Camden Brs raised a point of order about Item 1c on the Final Agenda, and it was Agreed to deal with the matter when it was reached.

EC REPORT TO CONFERENCE

75th EC attendances No discussion.

Branches and Membership A question was raised about the resignation of H Baldwin.

FLOOR RESN (J D'Arcy, Camden and Marshall, Redbridge) "THAT THE EC BE ASKED TO WRITE TO H BALDWIN EXPRESSING THE VIEW OF THIS CONFERENCE THAT HE RECONSIDER HIS DECUSION TO RESIGN FROM THE PARTY."

Carried 15-10.

1979 EC sub-committees The Gen Sec pointed out that 4 cttees were under strength and urged members to come forward to help.

Item for Discussion (Camden Br) "As the EC's function in connection with the Annual Ballot for Party Officers and the EC is simply to record the results declared by the Ballot Cttee, which was done at the EC meeting on 9th Jan 1979, subsequent alterations made by the EC were out of order."

Item for Discussion (Islington Br) "The need to re-define the Terms of Reference of the Ballot Cttee."

There was brief discussion of EC action over the result of the last EC ballot. Delegates thought it important to get clear on the correct procedure for the future.

INSTRUCTED RESN 1b (Westmin Br) "THAT THIS CONF INSTRUCTS THE EC TO ENSURE THAT IN FUTURE BALLOT PAPERS FOR THE ELECTION OF PARTY OFFICERS AND THE EC BE SENT TO MEMBERS' ADDRESSES INDIVIDUALLY FROM HO AND NOT TO BRANCH SECRETARIES FOR REDISTRIBUTION AS AT PRESENT: AND REMINDS MEMBERS THAT RETURNED BALLOT PAPERS MUST BE ADDRESSED DIRECTLY TO THE BALLOT CTTEE AT HO."

Carried 27-8

AMENDMENT (Glasgow Br) On line 3 between 'HO' and 'and', insert the words 'together with a stamped (or pre-paid) addressed envelope.'

Lost 7-27

RESN 4c (on investment in local authority bonds)

Islington Br agreed with the view that their resn was out of order as it conflicted with Rule.

FLOOR RESN (J D'Arcy, Camden and H Cottis, Southend) "That the Resn be withdrawn and resubmitted as an Item for Discussion."

Carried 23-2

EC REPORT (Cont'd)

Central Organiser One delegate expressed disquiet that 2 branches had been very shortlived, and wondered whether branch status should wait for a while.

SSPC It was Agreed to combine discussion with INSTRUCTED RESN 3c (Swansea & Camden Br) "THAT IN THE EVENT OF A CHANGEOVER TO THE PHOTO? LITHO PROCESS FOR PRINTING THE SS, THIS CONF INSTRUCTS THE EC TO RETAIN THE PRESENT FORM OF THE SS, IE. IN REGARD TO QUALITY OF PAPER, LAYOUT, SIZE OR TYPE USED AND GENERALLY TO RETAIN ITS PRESENT DISTINCTIVE AND UNIQUE CHARACTER."

Amendment (Westminster Br) Delete all after 'Conf' on line 2

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G 045

and replace with 'is of the opinion that the SSPC continue in the endeavour to improve the appearance of the SS.'

Carried 22-11

Amendment (Swansea Br) Delete all after 'Conf' on line 2 and replace with 'is of the opinion that the S PC will produce a journal in line with modern conditions.'

Lost 16-18  
Carried 22-10

SUB RESN

The point was raised that litho was originally said to be cheaper but this no longer seemed to be so. A Cttee member replied that this would depend on the cttee doing more of the work themselves. Some delegates thought the resn restrictive and implied that the appearance of the SS could not be improved, but others disagreed. It was also pointed out that an increase in sales would depend on an increase in activity.

FLOOR RESN ( L Weidberg, Islington and Hibbert, Southend) "THIS CONF RECOMMENDS THE EC TO PROCEED WITH OFFSET LITHO PRODUCTION OF THE SS."

Carried 19-11

Addendum (J D'Arcy and Mattingley, Mid Herts) "... and that a trial copy be prepared for consideration by members prior to a final decusion being made."

The Chair ruled the Addendum out of order. The point was made that the printing process and layout were quite separate. If members did not like the layout it could be changed.

Conference adjourned at 1-50 and recommenced at 3-00.

INSTRUCTED RESN 3d (Redbridge Br) "THAT THE CONTRACT WITH THE PDC BE TERMINATED AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT AND THE DESIREABILITY OF MEMBERS PARTICIPATION IN SELLING THE PARTY'S LITERATURE TO RETAILL OUTLETS IS AFFIRMED."

Lost 15-21

The view was expressed that the new method of sales did not come up to the old and it was reported that one outlet had been lost through the commercial distributor. Against this it was argued that PDC did provide some new outlets, but that members should themselves concentrate on newsagents as opposed to bookshops.

AMENDMENTS TO RULES

Rule 17 (Westmin Br) On line 3, delete the second word 'all' and add on line 4 between 'debates' and 'establish' the words 'except debates organised by Branches'.

Lost 17-20

Rule 18 (Glasgow and Westmin Brs) On line 2, between 'branch' and 'call' insert the words 'provided the EC consider there is a case to answer'.

Lost 15-18

(Islington Br) The first sentence be amended to read 'The Executive Committee, on receipt of a written detailed complaint by a member or Branch against a speaker, shall immediately send copies to the speaker referred to and the Propaganda Cttee and shall require from them, within one month, a written reply and a report respectively. The EC then may call upon such speaker to undergo an examination by a cttee appointed by the EC.' (the Rule to continue (line 4) as at present, from 'Such speaker...' etc).

Amendment (Westmin and Mid Herts Brs) On line 2 delete 'member or'.

Carried 22-10

SUB RESN Carried 22-14

Rule 22 (Camden and Westmin Brs) On line 2 delete 'twenty' and insert 'ten'.

Carried 24-11

(Redbridge Br) Replace the Rule with the following: 'Each Branch shall be entitled to send two delegates who must present credentials which will state the number of members present at the Branch when appointed. Delegates of Branches formed within the previous six months shall sit and vote only with the consent of the Conference. On instructed Resolution

Branch voting figures recorded at the Branch meeting shall count. Votes of Branches where delegates are given a free hand will count according to the number of members on credentials. Floor Resolutions will be decided by a show of hands of delegates present.'

Lost 2-34

Rule 28 (Lewisham Br) On line 4, delete 'people' and insert 'sympathisers'  
Carried 22-16

Rule 31 (Southend Br) On line 2, delete 'the Branch' and substitute 'that member's Branch'. On line 3, delete '14 days' and substitute '28 days'. On line 4, delete 'The Branch' and substitute 'The accused member's Branch'. On line 6, delete comma and substitute a full stop; delete 'subject to ratification by the EC.' and insert a new clause: 'Any Branch giving consideration to action against one or more of its own members under the terms of this rule shall, as a matter of course, firstly within 7 days notify the EC of its intention to convene the specially summoned meeting, specifying the date, time and location at which such meeting shall be held and secondly, before the commencement of that meeting, supply to the EC exact copies of the written charges against the member(s) together with copies, if any, of any defence received from the member(s) charged. The EC shall, upon receipt of the notice of such specially summoned meeting give notice to all Branches of the date, time and location of that meeting, in any case not less than 14 days before. The minutes of the specially summoned meeting shall be compiled in full at that meeting and be ratified by the Branch members present before the close of the meeting and, together with details by name of the members present and those absent and the results of any vote or ballot taken, be submitted to the EC within 14 days of the completion of that meeting. The EC shall, as a matter of priority, at the EC meeting next after receipt of the minutes of the specially summoned Branch meeting, ratify or otherwise set aside the results of any decision taken by the Branch concerned and shall, within 14 days or before the next Delegate Meeting or Annual Conference, whichever be the sooner, inform all Branches of the result together with the reasons for the decision they have taken.' On the last line, after 'Annual Conference' delete full stop and substitute comma. Add 'such matter, at the discretion of the delegates present, being afforded priority over all other business.'

Lost 3-30.

Amendt (Glasgow) Delete all after '... member's Branch' on line 4; then to follow on with all the remaining text of the existing Rule, from and including '...shall consider...' on line 4 of the Rule.

Lost 17-17

Rule 32 (Southend Br) On line 4 delete 'the' after 'forwarded to' and substitute 'all': insert full stop after 'Branches'; delete 'concerned'.

LINES EXCLUDED

On the last line add new clause: 'Full minutes of the meeting at which the decision of the EC is reached shall be compiled and shall, in respect of the application of this Rule, be ratified before the closure of the meeting and shall either within 14 days or before the commencement of the next Delegate Meeting or Annual Conference, whichever be the sooner, be submitted to all Branches. The right of appeal shall, at the discretion of the delegates present at the Delegate Meeting or Annual Conference, be accorded priority over all other business.'

Lost 5-31

Amendment (Mid Herts) Delete the whole of the proposed new clause (ie from 'On the last line...' on line 3 to end of item '...other business.')

Lost 12-25

Rule 33 (Southend Br) On line 2, after 'the EC' add: 'who must first have satisfied themselves that the provisions of Rules 31 and/or 32 have been correctly applied or, failing this, have given consideration to such evidence as to why each or both of these rules cannot have been applied.' On line 5, after 'dispute' insert new clause: 'The minutes of the EC meeting at which this decision is reached shall be compiled and, in respect of the consideration given to the application of this Rule, must be ratified by those present before the closure of the meeting.' On line 6 after 'charge' insert: 'together with copies of the minutes of the EC meeting at which the decision was taken, all evidence heard in reaching that decision, the names of those present and those absent...'; after 'Branches' on the same line, add '...within 14 days or before the commencement of the next Delegate Meeting or Annual Conference, whichever be the sooner...'.

On line 10, after 'accused', delete full stop and add ', consideration of such hearing being, at the discretion of the delegates present, accorded priority over all other business.'

Lost 2-33

EC REPORT (Cont'd)

Auditors It was Agreed to combine discussion with Item for Discussion (originally Instructed Resn 1c) on investment of money in local govt bonds.

FLOOR RESN (L Weidberg and Gluck, Islington) "THIS CONFERENCE REQUESTS THE EC TO INVESTIGATE THE QUESTION OF INVESTING MONEY IN LOCAL AUTHORITY BONDS."

Lost 6-22

In the course of a lengthy discussion, it was argued that now the Party did not object to receiving interest bonds would be a better investment and that the Party ought to get back as much of the workers' surplusvalue as it could. Against this it was argued that money was tied up for a considerable period with bonds. Different views were expressed over whether the amount of money available actually made any difference to the Party's level of activity.

Conference adjourned at 6-00 pm.

SATURDAY Proceedings recommenced at 2-00 pm.

Auditors (Cont'd) The Gen Sec read to delegates a report from the Auditors to the EC, suggesting the investment of money in a special deposit account, for periods of one month or longer with a higher interest rate.

FLOOR RESN (L Weidberg, Islington and Vanni, Glasgow) "CONFERENCE RECOMMENDS THE EC TO PUT SURPLUS MONEY IN A DIFFERENT BANK DEPOSIT ACCOUNT AT THEIR OWN DISCRETION."

Amendment (Brown and Critchfield, Westmin) Replace 'different' with 'special'. Agreed.

SUB RESN Carried 15-7

EC REPORT (Cont'd)

Tapes Cttee No discussion

Promises Cttee No discussion

Party Funds Organisers In reply to a question it was stated that there had been an almost 100% response to continue with regular contributions. HO Assistant HO Asst pointed out that she would not be able to do the work indefinitely and that it would be much better if a full-time member could be found.

Overseas Contacts Sec No discussion

Estate Management Cttee In reply to a question about a deceased member it was stated that the Cttee had formulated a draft will for him but he had died before it was properly formulated. Legal advice was that there was no possibility of contesting.

Media Cttee A member pointed out further cases of the Party's name getting into the press besides those in the Cttee's report.

Parliamentary Cttee It was Agreed to combine discussion with INSTRUCTED RESN 1d (Camden Br) "THAT THIS CONFERENCE ENDORSES THE RESN CARRIED BY THE 1978 DELEGATE MEETING IN RELATION TO THE SIGNING OF NOMINATION PAPERS FOR ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION: THIS CONFERENCE FURTHER ENDORSES THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES: 1. SIGNATURES SHALL ONLY BE INVITED WHEN IT HAS FIRST BEEN ASCERTAINED THAT THE SIGNATORY IS SYMPATHETIC TO THE AIMS OF THE PARTY. 2. AN UP TO DATE LIST OF NAMES SHALL BE KEPT, AND THE EC AND BRANCH APPROVAL SHALL BE OBTAINED TO ALL THE NAMES LISTED THEREON BEFORE THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN BEGINS. 3. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHALL OPPONENTS OF THE PARTY, OR MEMBERS OF OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES, BE INVITED TO SIGN, NOR SHALL PEOPLE WHO HOLD RELIGIOUS VIEWS. 4. EX-MEMBERS SHALL BE ACCEPTABLE UNLESS THERE ARE REASONS TO THE CONTRARY. 5. THE EC STILL TO BE REQUIRED TO PROPERLY SCRUTINISE THE PROPOSED LIST OF SIGNATORIES AS PER RULE 28."

Carried 26-9

Amendment (Westmin) Delete clause 2, and re-number clauses.

Education Organiser It was Agreed to combine discussion with INSTRUCTED RESN 4a "THAT THIS CONFERENCE INSTRUCTS THE EC TO EXPEDITE THE REISSUE OF THE REVISED EDUCATION SYLLABUS, AS REQUESTED BY THE 1978 DELEGATE MEETING." (Camden Br).

AMENDMENT (Westmin Br) DELETE ALL AFTER 'EXPEDITE THE' ON LINE ONE and REPLACE WITH 'ISSUE OF THE EDUCATION SYLLABUS BEING PREPARED BY THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE AS OUTLINED IN THE CIRCULAR ON EDUCATION SENT TO ALL BRANCHES BY THAT COMMITTEE (1ST OCT 1978).'

Carried 25-2

SUB RESN Carried 24-0

One member thought the Amendment out of order and designed to knock out the existing syllabus. The Gen Sec reported that the old syllabus was available. Members of the Education Ctte reported that they had been asked to revise the syllabus and this was a big job. It stopped around 1945 and was based on the first 9 chapters of Vol 1 of Capital on economics, but there had been much additional material since then. The aim was to devise a syllabus which would include the old one but go beyond it in a fruitful way. One member thought there had been no development in Marxist theory since Marx.

Propaganda Ctte No discussion on at what time and where meetings should be held took place.

Propaganda Ctte It was Agreed to combine discussion with INSTRUCTED RESN 2a (Camden Br) "THAT THIS CONFERENCE RESOLVES THAT IN VIEW OF THE PRESENT FAVOURABLE FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE PARTY A DETERMINED EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO ENCOURAGE ALL BRANCHES AND GROUPS TO ORGANISE AND CARRY OUT INDOOR PROPAGANDA MEETINGS WHEREVER PRACTICABLE AND ANY OTHER FORM OF ORGANISED ACTIVITY, WHICH WILL ENHANCE AND EXTEND THE PARTY'S CASE. WE THEREFORE CALL UPON THE EC TO MAKE FUNDS AVAILABLE TO BRANCHES AND GROUPS FOR SPECIAL OBJECTIVES WHICH CAN BE SHOWN TO BE PRACTICAL PROPOSITIONS AND WORTHY OF THE EXPENDITURE LIKELY TO BE INVOLVED."

AMENDMENT (Westmin Br) DELETE FROM LINES 1 & 2 'IN VIEW OF THE PRESENT FAVOURABLE FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE PARTY.'

Carried 27-6

SUB RESN Carried 34-0

The movers of the amendment argued that plans should be made not on the basis of large donations but of what the Party wanted to do. The movers of the resn stated they were in favour of the amendment. One Branch was puzzled why the resn was there, as they never found difficulties in approaching the EC as long as the money was available. On the Propaganda Ctte's report there was some disagreement whether Camden Br meetings had been mentioned and whether Earls Court meetings had been successful. The Ctte reported they would be holding a series of lectures to coincide with the Party's anniversary and the SSPC stated there would be some articles on the Party's history in the June S. It was stated that there would be a meeting as usual in Hyde Park on May Day, and differing views were expressed on the usefulness of a large decorated platform.

INSTRUCTED RESN 2b (Westmin Br) "THAT THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PARTY IS NOT THE TIME FOR COMPLACENT SELF-CONGRATULATION. WORKING FOR SOCIALISM IS AS IMPERATIVE TODAY AS IN 1904. TO THIS END THE PARTY MUST CONTINUALLY BE CLARIFYING AND EXTENDING THE SOCIALIST CASE. THE PARTY SHOULD BE ALIVE TO ALL THE TENDENCIES IN CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT, AWARE OF ADVANCES IN THE SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY, AND BE METICULOUS IN ITS CONCERN FOR ACCURACY. WE MUST NOT BE TEMPTED TO DOGMATISE THE 'CORRECT' SOUNDING PHRASE OF PAST TEXTS, WHICH IF INDULGED IN COULD DRAIN THE PARTY OF ITS VITALITY. ONE OF THE MAIN TASKS FOR TODAY IS TO SHARPEN THE RELEVANCE AND CREDIBILITY OF ITS PROPAGANDA SO THAT THE PARTY MAY BECOME AN EFFECTIVE AND DYNAMIC FORCE FOR SOCIALISM."

Carried 22-6

Some delegates were puzzled by the resn and thought instances should be given where the Party had failed to develop its case. The Party had been right on many things, including the First World War, the General Strike, Russia. We could be cautious in changing direction. There had been unfortunate experiences with groups like the Libertarian Communists. Other delegates thought it important to take note of the various cultural changes in capitali

and consider why the working class were no nearer to socialism.

Conference adjourned at 6-30 pm.

SUNDAY Conference recommenced at 11-15 am.

EC Report (Cont'd)

Propaganda Cttee A Cttee member reported that the June meetings in connexion with the Party's anniversary would have a block ad in the SS.

Publicity Cttee In reply to a question a Cttee member stated that there were plans for further ads in Voice of the Unions, Spare Rib and Liberal News for a few months and more replies were now coming from Spare Rib.

Gen Sec No discussion

Central Branch Sec No discussion

Review Journals Sec No discussion

Pamphlets Cttee In reply to a question a Cttee member stated that the Cttee's report on the Speciall Issue was almost ready to go th the EC. The Cttee would say there was no substitute for the nommal way of dealing with pamphlets, and that there were a number of things in it which were not wrong but likely to be misunderstood.

INSTRUCTED RESN 3a (Carden Br) "THAT THIS CONFERENCE INSTRUCTS THE EC TO PUBLISH A MANIFESTO IN THE FORM OF A SHORT PAMPHLET DURING AND RELATED TO THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PARTY'S FORMATION."

Lost 9-17

The Branch proposed something of 5-6,000 words, the size of Socialist Principles Explained. Some delegates thought anniversary publications were irrelevant to propaganda. Others were sympathetic but thought the idea could not be put into practice in the time available, and suggested a special issue of the SS.

FLOOR RESN (Wood and Crook, Lewisham) "THAT THIS CONF RECOMMENDS THAT THE EC AUTHORISE THE PUBLICATION OF A SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY ISSUE OF THE SS."

Lost 9-10

It was argued that this would help to sell the SS and would not involve much extra work. A member of the SSPC stated that there had been no support for the idea from any Branch they had visited.

FLOOR RESN (Grant and Waters, Islington) "THIS CONF RECOMMENDS THAT THE EC PREPARE A LEAFLET ON THE OCCASION OF THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PARTY."

Carried 10-7

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION (Westmin) The desirability of frequent, topical, short pamphlets.

The Branch's idea was for short pamphlets the size of a long SS xxx article up to 2,000 words, which could be produced in a few weeks to take advantage of events occurring outside the Party. They should be sold to cover cost. Delegates foresaw problems of production as they would fall between a pamphlet and a leaflet.

INSTRUCTED RESN 1a (SW London Br) "THAT THIS CONF INSTRUCTS THE EC TO REDEFINE THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PARTY OFFICERS AND THAT THOSE TERMS BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO."

Lost 12-23

Amendment (Westmin Br) DELETE ALL AFTER (PARTY OFFICERS' ON LINE 2.

Lost 10-24

Amendment (Camden Br) DELETE ALL AFTER 'EC TO' ON LINE 1 AND REPLACE WITH 'ENSURE THAT THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PARTY OFFICERS ARE STRICTLY ADHERED TO.'

Lost 18-19

Some delegates went into the history of recent events in the Party and said

existing to  
Vanni, Glasses  
Canada HO

that the Central Organiser had taken sides in a controversy and it was necessary to reestablish order. Others thought there was nothing wrong with existing terms of reference, and they could be only a guideline. A Motion (Vanni, Glasgow and Critchfield, Westmin) "That the Motion be put" was Carried.

HO Asst requested permission to address Conf and a Motion (J D'Arcy, Cawden and Cottis, Southend) "That permission be granted." was Carried 226z 12-8. HO Asst went into the history of her resignation and the Gen Sec read out EC resns re keys to the mailbox at HO. The Central Organiser stated he had requested a key because he was expecting urgent mail, especially from Oxford Br. A Motion (MacEwan, Edinburgh and Vanni, Glasgow) "Next business" was Carried 13-5.

Master Form C One delegate thought Branches should give more detailed information re lit sales.

MOTION (Cottis, Southend and Grant, Islington) "That the EC Report be adopted." C Agreed.

#### BRANCH REPORTS

Carden Br Regular meetings at Lincoln's Inn Fields, Tower Hill and Earls Court. 4 indoor meetings at Conway Hall, including one to introduce the new pamphlet. 3 planned for this year. Weekend seminar on democracy and other schools.

Glasgow Br Weekend school, good turnout of non-members. 2 debates with large audiences. 2 indoor meetings, very successful. Harder to sell the SS outdoors due to political climate and price. Better round pubs. Problems with flyposting, but it gets people to meetings. the Branch had applied Rule 2 more strictly. Funding from HO for ads in papers.

Haringey Br There had been few lectures and visitors, and the Branch hoped to be more active in the future.

Islington Br First meeting held in Sept, with a fair number of first-time visitors. Canvassing and sale of SS in Chapel Market. Average attendance of 9 and it was hoped there would be some Forms A in the near future.

Conference adjourned at 1-35 pm and recommenced at 2-35 pm.

Bolton Br Outdoor and indoor meeting with London speaker. A series of talks advertised in the press, flyposting and leaflets. Support also given to Manchester, W Yorks and Sheffield. Disappointing lack of local support for a weekend school in Huddersfield. SS sales had dropped owing to weather and price.

Lewisham Br Regular Br meetings. 2 indoor meetings flyposted did not attract outsiders.

Mid Herts Small Branch with 10 members. 50 SS per month. The Branch had considered closing last year but the decision to carry on was correct.

Redbridge Br Sale of SS on streets, Ilford Station and local colleges. w 2 news-ents, 1 now has 3 regular customers. 3 indoor meetings, 2 very good and one in very bad weather. Loss of 2 members (deceased) and 3 transferred.

Southend Br 4-5 doz SS in bad weather. Built up app 30 subscribers. The local authority was against outdoor meetings or sale of SS in shopping precinct.

SW London Br Each member makes own arrangements re lit. Most members come a fair distance. The Branch had cancelled its lit order owing to a backlog.

Swansea Br The Branch had passed through a bad phase when it might have folded. Assistance had been given from HO. 3,000 leaflets on devolution had distributed. Main problem was to get the Branch known.

*SPGB 2  
Seminar  
Chapter on  
'Democracy  
and their Right'  
at 1978 Co  
ITEM 2*

W London Br The Br had lost its meeting place and the Gen Sec had corresponded with the authority with no result. New venue at Chiswick Town Hall. Regular Br meetings and a number of lectures. 2-3 doz SS, double in summer. Support for Lincoln's Inn Fields and Earls Court.

Westminster Br App 50 members, average attendance 14. Recently moved to Paddington. Last year 12 lectures, average 3-4 non-members. 9 doz SS per month, 2 outdoor sales spots.

W Yorks Br Branch nearly folded last year, but helped by Central Organiser. Members are dispersed. 3 public meetings. 13 members, 6-7 average attendance.

INSTRUCTED RESN 3b (Westmin) "THAT THIS CONF INSTRUCTS THE EC TO SET UP A WORKING COMMITTEE TO PREPARE THE WSY FOR THE PUBLICATION OF AN OCCASIONAL SOCIALIST PARTY THEORETICAL JOURNAL THAT CAN PРИBE DEEPLY INTO ASPECTS OF THE SOCIALIST CASE. THE JOURNAL TO BE UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE EC AND TO BE SELF-FINANCING."

LOst 16-18

Some delegates argued that a journal was needed to stimulate members, and that at the moment the SS had to carry articles which were sometimes of interest to members but not to non-members. Others thought the time was wrong for such a journal and that it might create schisms which would not otherwise exist or detract from other Party work.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION (Southend Br) The preparation and publication for sale annually of a Socialist Year Book, to consist of major items of interest from the political scene of each calendar year together with the comments of the SPGB upon them.

Very little discussion. One delegate asked if there had been anything of interest since the formation of the Party, and it was pointed out that amongst other things there had been 2 world wars.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION (Camden Br) The advertising of meetings in the SS.

A Camden delegate stated that the original dispute with the layout man of the SS had now been sorted out. There was dispute with 2 delegates whether the SSPC was excluding branch notices.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION (SW London Br) The EC's disregard of Party rules.

There was brief discussion and disagreement over recent actions of the present and previous EC's, including the ballot for EC member and the EC referring matters to Conf and ADM.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION (Mid Herts) Should not the EC and Party Office be elected to serve from Annual Conf to Annual Conf and the counting of the votes take place during Conf?

A number of delegates were in favour of the idea, but one stated that this used to be the arrangement and it was found unsatisfactory. The suggestion was made that in any case the ballot should take place before Christmas.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION (Westmin) A disciplined Annual Conf.

There was general agreement that delegates should take more care not to repeat themselves and not to interrupt.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION (Westmin) The relevance of the Speakers' Test.

Some delegates thought we should consider whether the test was desirable at all since it did not test a member's knowledge in depth. Others thought this would in any case be inappropriate and that basic knowledge was what had to be tested.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION (Islington) The Party should reaffirm its position on democratic and trade union rights as stated in "Questions of the Day" (chapter on less developed countries) and in "Russia Since 1917" (chapter on 'Democracy in Russia') and specifically repudiate the article 'Russians and their Rights' in the July 1977 SS.

Brief discussion and reference to previous discussion of the issue at 1978 Conference.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION (Islington) The Party's attitude to Marx's phrase 'The Dictatorship of the Proletariat.'

The Branch thought there was a case for repudiating the phrase, even though Marx may have meant something very different from its present use. One delegate referred to the relevant passage of Questions of the Day on Marx and dictatorship.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION (Westmin) Does the Party equally oppose both Monetarism and Keynesianism?

There was some feeling in the Branch that a monetarist position had crept into some propaganda and that the Party should reaffirm its opposition to monetarism.

Conference adjourned at 5-45 pm.

To: EC  
From: Gen Sec

17th April, 1979

REPORT OF RESNS CARRIED AT ANNUAL CONF 1979

1. Amendment to Rule 18 "The first sentence be amended to read 'The Executive Cttee, on receipt of a written detailed complaint by a br against a speaker, shall immediately send copies to the speaker referred to & the Prop Cttee & shall require from them, within 1 mth, a written reply & a rpt respectively. The EC then may call upon such speaker to undergo an examination by a cttee apptd by the EC.' (the Rule to continue (line 4) as at present, from 'Such speaker ... ' etc.)". Carried 22-14
2. Amendment to Rule 22 "On line 2 delete 'twenty' and insert 'ten'." Carried 24-11
3. Amendment to Rule 28 "On line 4, delete 'people' and insert 'sympathisers'." Carried 22-16
4. Instructed res (1b on final agenda) "That this Conf instructs the EC to ensure that in future Ballot Papers for the election of Party officers & the EC be sent to members' addresses individually from HO & not to br secs. for redistribution as at present; & reminds members that returned Ballot papers must be addressed directly to Ballot Cttee at HO." Carried 27-8
5. Instructed res (3c on final agenda) "That in the event of a changeover to the photo-litho process for printing the SS, this Conf is of the opinion that the SSRC continue in the endeavour to improve the appearance of the SS." Carried 22-10
6. Instructed res (1d on final agenda) "That this Conf endorses the res carried by the 1978 Delegate Mtg in relation to the signing of Nomination Papers for electoral participation; this Conf further endorses the following guide-lines:  
1. Signatures shall only be invited when it has first been ascertained that the signatory is sympathetic to the aims of the Party.  
2. An up-to-date list of names shall be kept, & the EC & br approval shall be obtained to all the names listed thereon before the election campaign begins.  
3. Under no circumstances shall opponents of the Party, or members of other political parties, be invited to sign, nor shall people who hold religious views.  
4. Ex-members shall be acceptable unless there are reasons to the contrary.  
5. The EC still to be required to properly scrutinise the proposed list of signatories as per Rule 28." Carried 26-9
7. Instructed res (4a on final agenda) "That this Conf instructs the EC to expedite the issue of the ed syllabus being prepared by the Ed Cttee as outlined in the circular on ed sent to all brs by that cttee (1st Oct 1978)." Carried 24-0
8. Instructed res (2b on final agenda) "That the 75th Anniversary of the Party is not the time for complacent self-congratulation. Working for Socialism is as imperative today as in 1904. To this end the Party must continually be clarifying & extending the Socialist case. The Party should be alive to all the tendencies in capitalist development, aware of advances in the sciences & technology, & be meticulous in its concern for accuracy. We must not be tempted to dogmatise the 'correct' sounding phrase of past texts, which if indulged in could drain the Party of its vitality. One of the main tasks facing the SPGB today is to sharpen the relevance & credibility of its propaganda so that the Party may become an effective & dynamic force for Socialism." Carried 22-6
9. Instructed res (2a on final agenda) "That this Conf resolves that a determined effort shd be made to encourage all brs & groups to organise & carry out indoor propaganda utgs wherever practicable & any other form of organised activity, which will enhance & extend the Party's case. We therefore call upon the EC to make funds available to brs & groups for special objectives which can be shown to be practical propositions & worthy of the expenditure likely to be involved." Carried 34-0
10. Floor res: "That the EC be asked to write to Cde Baldwin expressing the view of this Conf that he reconsider his decision to resign from the Party." Carried 15-10
11. Floor res: "This Conf recommends the EC to proceed with offset litho prodn of the SS." Carried 19-11
12. Floor res: "Conf recommends the EC to put surplus monies in a spec Bank deposit acct at their own discretion." Carried 15-7
13. Floor res: "This Conf recommends that the EC prepare a leaflet on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Party." Carried 10-7